

Senate Judiciary Committee
Re: SB220

SENATE JUDICIARY
COMMITTEE NO. 16
DATE 2/11/13
BILL NO. SB220

I am speaking today in opposition to SB220.

I am a retired Special Agent, Criminal Investigator series. I first worked with the FBI, then with the US Forest Service. My personal experience is that legalizing assisted suicide would encourage people with many good years to be "dead before their time."

Doctors do not know the future. They are often wrong. Indeed, this has happened twice in my family.

The first time was with my father. At age 66, he collapsed as he was leaving a doctor's appointment in the hospital at Glasgow. A week or so later his doctor recommended that we "pull the plug." I instead moved my father to another hospital for a second opinion and treatment. He fully recovered and lived nine more years. The doctor in Glasgow, with years of experience and good training, was wrong.

The second time was with me. When I was 62 years old, I was paralyzed due to a disease and put on a respirator. After four months of declining health my team of four doctors offered to take me off the respirator. They said that there was no chance of recovery. They said that if I lived, I would always be respirator dependant and a quadriplegic. I refused their offer.

My health continued to decline until around the eighth month when I had my first sign of improvement. I lost my paralysis and even went back to work. My doctors, excellent doctors with years of experience, who became my good friends, were wrong. It is now 14 years later.

Proponents of assisted suicide sometimes claim that assisted suicide is no different than pulling the plug. This is untrue. When you pull the plug, the patient doesn't necessarily die. If the patient does die, he or she dies due to his or her illness, not a lethal overdose.

I want to keep assisted suicide out of Montana. Please vote NO to SB220.

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